

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

DATE DISTR. 11 February 1948

SUBJECT Organization and Tactics of
Red Army Tank Brigade "S"

NO. OF PAGES 4

PLACE
ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

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1. During August and September 1947 maneuvers involving a Soviet tank formation took place on Zwickau airfield and on the former Zwickau garrison training ground two kms. SW of the town. This formation was subsequently moved back to the east of the Elbe, probably to the Konigsbruck Training Area.

2. [redacted] this formation is known as Tank Brigade "S", one such tank brigade being scheduled to form an integral part of the organization of the new Russian (armored ?) divisions. The fighting strength of this formation is 2,500 men, 2,300 of whom actually take part in battle.

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3. This unit was observed to undertake two night exercises, live ammunition being used and the wounded being hauled aboard the tanks as under battle conditions. Medical aid men were noticed on the tanks.

4. After one of the exercises two sacks were found on Zwickau airfield, both measuring 80 cm by 40 cm and filled with what felt like hay. While one was soft and resilient to the touch, the other was hard and flat as though it contained crystals. The sacks had apparently been used in one of the vehicles, presumably to absorb nitrogen or gas.

5. Zwickau airfield is now empty, the only aircraft seen during the maneuvers having been artillery cooperation planes.

Soviet Tank Brigade "S"

6. "Peace-time" march formation (in one column, but maintaining battle distances):

Advance guard

Advanced reconnaissance

4 tanks
2 signal vehicles

Main reconnaissance

12 tanks
2 signal vehicles
4 fuel vehicles
6 troop carriers
4 tanks

Main body

4 tanks
4 fuel vehicles

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DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

Auth: DDA REG. 77/1763

Date: 2 May 78

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6 troop carriers
8 tanks
4 fuel vehicles
2 signal vehicles
4 recovery vehicles
8 tanks
6 troop carriers
4 tanks

Rearguard

2 signal vehicles
4 tanks

Total: 48 tanks
8 signal vehicles
18 troop carriers
12 fuel vehicles
4 repair/recovery vehicles

Notes:

- a. Brigade headquarters does not usually accompany the formation on exercises, but when it does so it is located towards the front of the main body in command tanks and signal vehicles.
 - b. All vehicles of this formation are said to be tracked, but no further details are given.
 - c. Tanks: According to the above-mentioned Soviet officer, only modern T-34's are used, but the unit observed at Zwickau was equipped with much heavier new Josef Stalin tanks.
 - d. Signal vehicles: Six men per vehicle. Signalling equipment is unknown, but short-wave transmission between vehicles of the formation is definitely known to be carried on.
 - e. Repair/recovery vehicles: Crew of four. Tank chassis mounting vehicle recovery equipment.
 - f. Fuel vehicles: Crew of four.
 - g. Armored troop carriers: Each is towed by an armored tractor. One hundred infantrymen equipped only with light weapons are squeezed into each carrier.
 - h. No artillery apart from the tank guns was observed.
7. "War-time" formation: Similar to the "peace-time" march formation, but divided into two columns moving parallel and thus shortening the total length of the column.
 8. Formation "S" (adopted by the brigade when moving up to battle and when making a halt):

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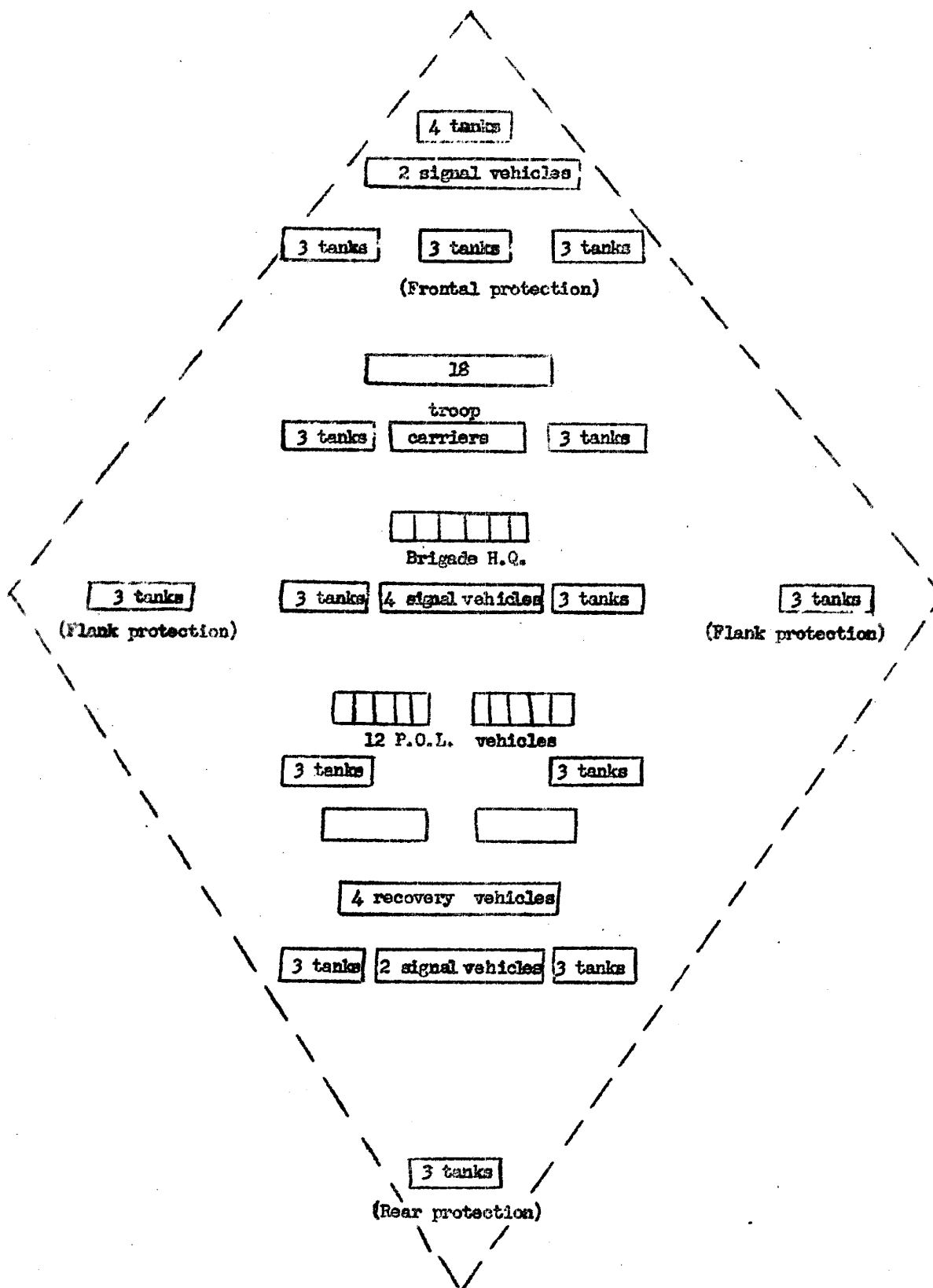
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Front to rear was approximately 600 meters; distance between flanks was 450 meters.

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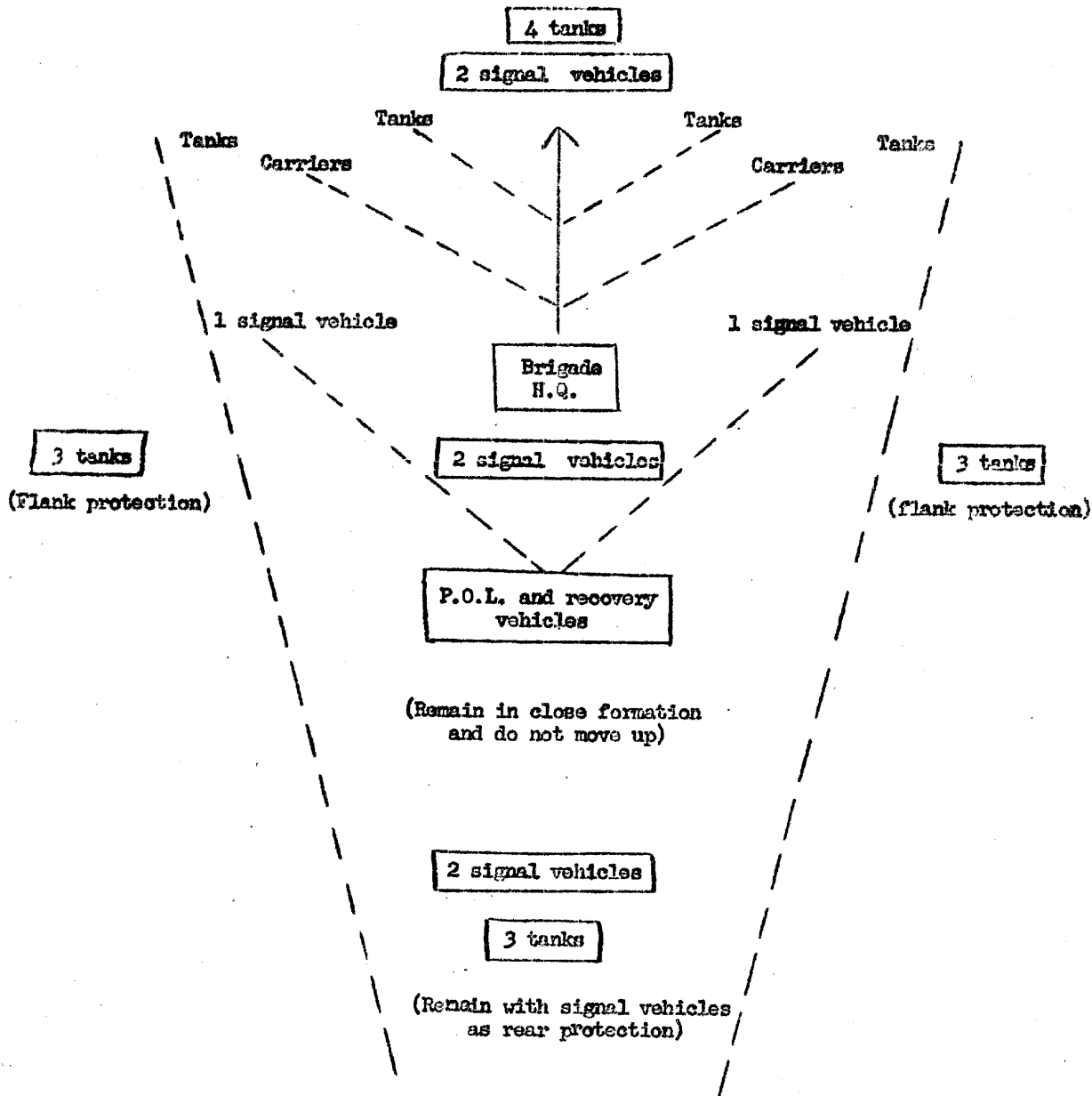
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9. Deployment on going into battle:



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